

does and the effect it may have. It is a real pleasure for me to stand on the floor of the U.S. Senate and say, Dick, thank you for the 1,700 great 30-minute shows you have done in your past. Thank you for all of the straight calls you made on the basketball court. Thank you for marrying Rebecca, who is a wonderful woman. Thank you for welcoming Lori Geary as your replacement every Sunday morning at 8:30. I now know, when I get up on Sundays, I will be going to church not with Dick Williams but with Lori Geary.

God bless you, Dick. Thanks for your contribution to Georgia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF PAUL B. MATEY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today having just voted no on the motion invoking cloture on Paul Matey's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Now, I know speeches on procedure rarely make headlines, but I cannot be silent as the majority shreds long-held norms for political gain. Once again, the Republican majority has ignored the blue-slip process that allows Senators to either green light or prevent hearings on judicial nominees from their home States.

Some Americans may wonder, why does this matter? Well, the blue-slip process gives the people a voice through their elected representatives on who ultimately renders justice in their State. Neither Senator BOOKER nor I have returned blue slips for Mr. Matey. In fact, Mr. Matey's confirmation hearing took place before Senator BOOKER—our State's voice on the Judiciary Committee—was even extended the common courtesy of meeting with Mr. Matey. It wasn't for lack of trying. Senator BOOKER requested time with Mr. Matey, but when he didn't receive it, the Judiciary Committee proceeded anyway.

To add insult to injury, committee Republicans falsely claimed the White House had meaningfully consulted with myself and Senator BOOKER, the home State Senators, and that is simply not the case. There never was meaningful consultation between the White House and Senator BOOKER or me to identify a highly qualified consensus nominee—rather, we were informed about the decision to nominate Mr. Matey—nor did I receive any offer to meet with Mr. Matey, not before his nomination, not after his nomination, not even to date as we are voting on the Senate floor.

Look, I have come to expect this behavior from the Trump White House, but in the Senate, Democrats always—always—respected the blue-slip process during our time in the majority. That is undeniable.

Before President Trump took office, only five judges in the past century were confirmed with only one blue slip, much less no blue slips. Never has a Democratic-led Senate ever held a hearing or confirmed a judicial nomi-

nee without a blue slip from a Republican Senator. It is shameful.

As long as the President keeps packing our courts with corporate-friendly Federalist Society judges, the Republican majority is willing to destroy a process that Senator Orrin Hatch—former chairman of the Judiciary Committee—once called “the last remaining check on the President's judicial appointment power.”

President Trump's nominees are now being confirmed at record speed, despite objections from home State Senators.

My Republican friends claim to be the party of conservatism. Yet there is nothing conservative about sweeping aside century-old norms for political gain. They have put their party before country and show no fidelity to the institutions that have made this country great.

Aside from the degradation of Senate norms surrounding Mr. Matey's nomination, I have real concerns with his record. The people of New Jersey have no appetite for a judge who served in Gov. Chris Christie's administration and was once even called a protegee of our esteemed former Governor.

As deputy chief counsel for Governor Christie, Mr. Matey said he tried to ensure that that administration followed “the highest standards of propriety, ethics, and legality.”

Somehow I question that. Consider what the people of New Jersey had to go through during Governor Christie's tenure: the Bridgegate scandal, the defunding of a Rutgers institute that was run by a Federal nominee, the spiteful removal of a security detail from former Governor Codey, and the rampant mismanagement of Superstorm Sandy relief contracts, which forced too many families to live in trailers for years on end. That is quite a list—quite a list.

I struggle to believe that Mr. Matey, the second most senior attorney in the Christie administration, had no knowledge of this behavior.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Matey could not detail any of the steps he took to ensure ethics rules were followed and declined to offer any description of his supposed “rigorous system” of monitoring and oversight at his confirmation hearing.

Apparently, Mr. Matey's system wasn't so rigorous, considering that Bridgegate—for those of my colleagues who may not know, although I think everybody knows, is when the operatives of the Christie administration closed access to the George Washington Bridge from the New Jersey side, which caused massive—massive—tieups on the New Jersey side, all to politically punish the mayor of the community where the George Washington Bridge leads from on the New Jersey side.

Bridgegate amounted to one of the most egregious abuses of political power against everyday New Jersey families in our history. He was sup-

posedly the guy who was making sure there was a rigorous system of monitoring and oversight. Well, I don't know how that happened.

I also have concerns about Mr. Matey's career after working for Governor Christie.

During his time as the senior vice president of University Hospital in Newark, a nationwide investigation gave the hospital an F—F, failure—for patient safety standards. Mr. Matey has acknowledged that while these issues were medical in nature, he did have some personal responsibility to mitigate risks to patients.

Likewise, some of Mr. Matey's writings suggest a hostility toward plaintiff attorneys who help everyday Americans take on powerful corporate interests in class action lawsuits.

In 2005, he authored an article with now-Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch that lamented how the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dura Pharmaceuticals* was a missed opportunity to “curb frivolous fraud claims” and dismissed plaintiff attorneys as seeking “free rides to fast riches.” In other words, Paul Matey saw a very narrow question in the *Dura Pharmaceuticals* case as an opening for the Court to make a sweeping ruling on all securities class actions. Now, that is what you call an activist judge.

Matey then goes on to decry the “enormous toll on the economy” securities fraud litigation takes on corporations but with little concern for the actual victims of security fraud.

Most troubling to me is how Mr. Matey has done zero—I repeat, zero—pro bono work throughout his legal career. His Senate Judiciary questionnaire lacks any record of pro bono representation. When he was asked about it, Mr. Matey claimed his work on behalf of the State of New Jersey satisfied the requirement. I couldn't disagree more. That is not pro bono work. You were paid for it.

Canon 2 of the American Bar Association's Code of Professional Responsibility explicitly emphasizes the importance of pro bono work. For many corporate lawyers, representing the underserved is the only way to witness firsthand how the scales of justice in this country are too often tipped in favor of the wealthy and well connected. Pro bono work helps lawyers cultivate sound judgment and is especially important to those seeking to become Federal judges.

Mr. Matey has done nothing to serve the disadvantaged, and that does not bode well for the fair administration of justice, nor does the Republican majority's disregard for procedures like blue slips bode well for the Senate's constitutional role to provide advice and consent or our responsibility to help build a judiciary that is responsive to the needs of the American people in the courtroom.

For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose confirmation of Paul Matey to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. We are better than this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Delaware.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, last month, just hours after Congress passed bipartisan legislation to fully fund our Federal Government, I was privileged to join with Senator JEFF MERKLEY of Oregon and four Members of the House of Representatives, including our at-large Congresswoman from Delaware, LISA BLUNT ROCH-ESTER, to lead a congressional delegation to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—three countries that are oftentimes collectively referred to as the Northern Triangle.

Our delegation was on a factfinding mission. We wanted to drill down on the root causes of illegal immigration from Central America and assess the effectiveness of a new approach in recent years to help improve conditions on the ground in those three countries.

On our flight to Guatemala, several of us watched as President Trump—in order to build his long-promised wall—declared a national emergency, even though while illegal immigration spiked in the last couple of months across our southern border, if you go back to 2001 through the end of 2018, it has actually dropped by, believe it or not, 80 percent.

As former chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I understand the need for secure borders, and I have supported efforts to enhance border security over the last two decades that I have served in this body.

I have been down to Central America any number of times with people like Gen. John Kelly, when he was the SOUTHCOM commander, with Jeh Johnson, with RON JOHNSON, both of whom served as chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and John McCain. We went into that part of the world and along our border with Mexico to better understand what our needs are for border security.

Since 2003, the United States has spent, believe it or not, \$263 billion—that is almost one-quarter of a trillion dollars—on border security.

We have doubled the number of border agents. We have deployed hundreds of miles of barriers and roads in places where they are most effective. We have funded highly sophisticated surveillance aircraft, equipment on drones and airplanes, helicopters, mile-high dirigibles, along with motion detectors, high-speed boats, tunnel detectors, and a lot more.

The approach on border security at our border with Mexico needs to be multilayered, and it is. There are some places barriers do make sense—a lot of places, in fact. There are some places that actually walls—the kind President Trump has envisioned, think San Diego and maybe Juarez—make sense, but there are a lot of other places where different kinds of barriers make sense.

In some places, roads alongside of barriers make sense.

We have deployed aircraft. We have deployed fixed-wing aircraft. We have deployed helicopters. We have deployed drones. If you just put them out there by themselves, they are not going to do much good, but if you put highly sophisticated equipment on each of those platforms, they give us the ability to see from our border into Mexico as far as 20, 25 miles in all kinds of weather—people as small as children who are approaching our border—and then we know where to deploy our Border Patrol to meet them and intercept them.

We can put the same kind of sophisticated surveillance equipment on dirigibles that go up 5,000 feet, 10,000 feet into the air. We can put them on towers that are mobile, towers that are stationary along the border as well.

We can put people on horseback. We can put, believe it or not, some of our Border Patrol officers on horseback. The reason we do that is, in areas with high vegetation, the Border Patrol officer on a horse—a big horse—can see over the vegetation and pick up people trying to come across the border illegally.

In some places, boats make sense, high-speed boats. In other places, boat ramps make sense. If you don't have boat ramps, you can't put the boat in, and you don't have much mobility.

Those are some of the things we have done in terms of providing better border security.

The encouraging news is, a lot of it has worked. A lot of it has worked, but we could build a wall from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, and if that is all we do, people are still going to come to this country—not so much from Mexico. People used to come in huge numbers from Mexico.

If you look back in the history of the last especially 15 years, most of the folks who were coming here illegally were coming from Mexico across our borders. Today, it is quite different. There are more Mexicans going back into Mexico than there are Mexicans coming into the United States. Most of the illegal immigration is not coming from Mexico. It is coming from Guatemala. It is coming from Honduras. It is coming from El Salvador.

The trek from the Northern Triangle—these countries right here—up through Mexico to our border is over 1,000 miles, probably closer to 1,500 miles, depending on how you want to get there.

The spike in immigration we have seen in the last several months is mostly from Guatemala's mountainous highlands. They have a lot of indigenous people, and they don't have a very good lifestyle. They have a lot of malnourishment, a lot of stunted growth, and not a lot in terms of encouragement and economic opportunity. Let me tell you a quick story of the reason why these people are trying to get out of there.

In the southern part of our State, Sussex County is our biggest county.

We raise enormous numbers of chickens there. For every person that live in Delaware, there are 300 chickens. I know the Presiding Officer has a lot of chickens in his State, too. We have a lot of folks who come up, including from Guatemala, and work in poultry processing plants. They are good workers. They work hard.

We have a nonprofit in southern Delaware, in Georgetown, DE, called La Esperanza, which means "hope." They work with indigenous populations, illegal and legal migrants, who have come to southern Delaware. A couple years ago, I was visiting La Esperanza, and they told me the story about a young boy and his younger sister who fled Guatemala. They came to the United States and, ultimately, to Delaware.

This is why they came. The 15-year-old boy in Guatemala was approached by gangs in his community. They said: We want you to join our gang.

He said: Let me talk to my parents first before I do that.

He knew his parents wouldn't be too excited with that. He talked to his parents, who said: You are not going to join a gang. We don't want you to do that. Just tell them no.

He avoided the gang members for a while, but they finally caught him and said: Are you going to join our gang?

He said: I talked to my parents, and they don't want me to do that, so not now. I am not going to do it now.

They said: We have a message for you and your parents. If you don't join our gang, somebody in your family is going to die.

He went home and told his parents, and their message to him was: Join the gang. Just don't do anything stupid.

So he joined the gang. They have to go through an initiation ritual, and as part of that ritual, he was called on to rape his 13-year-old sister. He reported what was expected of him to his parents, and within a week he and his sister were on their way out of that country.

The gangs in these countries, especially in Guatemala, are entrepreneurial. They may be involved in trafficking people. They may be involved in trafficking drugs. They are really good at extortion—extorting money from small businesses and going to a business and saying: I want you to pay me protection money. If you provide protection money, I will see that you are not harmed.

The merchant says: Who are you protecting me from?

You are actually being protected from the guy who is trying to extort money from you, and if you don't pay the money, they will kill you. It is just like that. As for the rate of extortion in these three countries from gangs who do multiple kinds of crimes, that is one of their favorites.

The reason why people live lives of misery has a lot to do with us—because we are addicted to drugs. The drugs are trafficked through these three countries, and we are complicit in their misery.